

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 074300

R 030807Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4825
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN UNN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 WARSAW 7867

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PL

SUBJ: THE CRISIS IN POLAND: A NATO CONSENSUS

1. EIGHT NATO CHIEFS OF MISSION RESIDENT IN WARSAW MET OCTOBER
29. PRESENT WERE THE AMBASSADORS OF BELGIUM, GREECE, ITALY,
THE NETHERLANDS, NORWAY, TURKEY, THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND THE
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UNITED STATES. (THERE ARE NO CANADIAN AND PORTUGUESE AMBASSADORS

AT THE MOMENT; THE DANISH AMBASSADOR WAS ACCOMPANYING HIS PRIME MINISTER, WHO WAS VISITING POLAND, AND THE FRG AMBASSADOR WAS ON CONSULTATIONS IN BONN.) THE FOLLOWING WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE MEETING.

2. THE CURRENT CRISIS IS MORE SERIOUS THAN THOSE OF 1956 OR 1970, BECAUSE: (A) THERE IS NO VISIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE PRESENT REGIME; (B) THERE IS A STRONG -- EVEN BITTER -- REJECTION OF THE REGIME BY A BROAD, INFORMAL OPPOSITION, WHICH EMBRACES THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS, THE PEASANTRY, THE INTELLECTUALS, UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, THE CHURCH, AND REFORMIST COMMUNISTS (E.G., WLADYSLAW BIENKOWSKI); (C) THE REGIME IS AT AN IMPASSE. IT HAS NO NEW POLICY. A VERY DELICATE BALANCE EXISTS IN THE COUNTRY; THIS COULD EASILY BE UPSET -- IF IT WERE, THERE COULD BE A CATAclysm.

3. CONTRARY TO SPECULATION IN THE WESTERN PRESS (E.G., FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, OCTOBER 20), THE REGIME DOES NOT NOW SEEM TO BE RESORTING TO A MORE REPRESSIVE COURSE. ON THE CONTRARY, IT CONTINUES TO TAKE GREAT PAINS TO AVOID ACTIONS WHICH COULD CONCEIVABLY LIGHT THE FUSE OF A SOCIAL EXPLOSION. THUS, WHEN CORRESPONDENTS OF FOREIGN NEWS ORGANIZATIONS BECAME AWARE OF ANTONI MACIEREWICZ'S ARREST, HE WAS RELEASED. GIEREK'S KATOWICE ADDRESS TO THE COAL MINERS (OCTOBER 14) HAD AN UNCHARACTERISTICALLY HARSH AND ACCUSATORY TONE. IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE OF OCTOBER 25, HOWEVER, HE WAS BACK ON THE SAFER GROUND OF ADMITTING THAT THE REGIME HAD MADE MISTAKES AND OF ASKING FOR POPULAR UNDERSTANDING.

4. DESPITE THE GRAVE DIFFICULTIES IN WHICH IT FINDS ITSELF, THE REGIME SEEMS INTENT UPON MAINTAINING ITS "WESTPOLITIK," EVEN IF IT MUST TEMPORARILY REDUCE THE TEMPO AND VOLUME OF THE IMPORTATION OF MAJOR PLANTS FROM THE WEST. TO ABANDON THIS POLICY NOW WOULD SERVE NOTICE ON THE PEOPLE THAT THEY MUST FORGET THE DREAM OF SATISFYING THEIR DEMANDS FOR MORE AND BETTER CONSUMER DURABLES. THE POPULAR REACTION WOULD BE DANGEROUS.

5. AT THE SAME TIME, IT APPEARS THAT THE USSR WILL HELP POLAND BY SUPPLYING FEED-GRAIN (THE FEELING WAS THAT BETWEEN ONE-MILLION AND 1.5- MILLION TONS WOULD BE DELIVERED). ONE AMBASSADOR HAD HEARD THAT, DURING JAROSZEWICZ'S VISIT TO MOSCOW, THE SOVIETS

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HAD AGREED TO MAINTAIN THE PRICE OF PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AT THE 1976 LEVEL THROUGHOUT THE REMAINDER OF THE 1976-80 FIVE-YEAR PLAN. (COMMENT: HIS COLLEAGUES EXPRESSED GREAT SKEPTICISM, SINCE ANY SUCH CONCESSION WOULD APPARENTLY HAVE PREDECEDENTIAL FORCE FOR THE OTHER CEMA CONSUMERS OF SOVIET OIL. THERE IS NOW, HOWEVER, A SERIOUS ENERGY SITUATION IN POLAND. THE GOP IS TRYING VARIOUS DEVICES TO LIMIT DOMESTIC COAL CONSUMPTION SO THAT MORE WILL BE AVAILABLE TO EXPORT FOR HARD

CURRENCY. IN SOME PLACES, E.G., WARSAW, COAL RATIONING HAS BEEN INTRODUCED AND HOUSEHOLDERS ARE RECEIVING ONLY ABOUT HALF OF THEIR ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HEATING. ACCORDING TO A RANKING OFFICIAL OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION, JOZEF PAJESTKA, BY 1980 POLAND WILL BE A NET IMPORTER OF FUEL FOR THE PRODUCTION OF ENERGY. POLAND'S MAJOR NEW COAL-MINING PROJECTS, LUBLIN AND BELCHATOW, ARE NOT EXPECTED TO BEGIN PRODUCING UNTIL 1981 OR '82. END COMMENT.)

6. CONTRARY TO THE FEAR EXPRESSED BY POLISH CITIZENS TO NORMAN DAVIES, WHO REPORTED IT IN AN OTHERWISE EXCELLENT RECENT ARTICLE IN THE LONDON TIMES, THE AMBASSADORS AGREED THAT THE LAST THING THE SOVIETS ARE LIKELY TO ATTEMPT IS ANY DIRECT OR FORCIBLE INTERVENTION IN POLISH AFFAIRS. THEY ARE EVERY BIT AS WELL AWARE AS THE PZPR POLITBIURO OF THE EXPLOSIVENESS OF THE SITUATION AND HAVE NO DESIRE TO END UP SHOOTING POLISH WORKERS, UNLESS THIS PROVES TO BE AN ABSOLUTELY UNAVOIDABLE NECESSITY.

7. I ASKED WHETHER ANY OF MY COLLEAGUES HAD AN EXPLANATION FOR THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET DEPUTY MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, COLONEL-GENERAL NIKOLAY ALEKSEYEV, IN THE COMPANY OF FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE SOVIET STATE PLANNING COMMITTEE GEORGIY TITOV, DURING A CALL ON JAROSZEWICZ OCTOBER 23. WE WERE DISINCLINED TO REGARD HIS PRESENCE HERE AS CONNECTED WITH THE SECURITY OF THE POLISH COMMUNIST REGIME OR OF THE SOVIET TROOPS STATIONED IN POLAND, SINCE WE WOULD NOT EXPECT THAT A VISIT FOR SUCH A PURPOSE WOULD BE PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED OR WOULD INVOLVE A JOINT CALL ON THE POLISH PREMIER. ONE LINE OF SPECULATION WAS THAT THE SOVIETS WERE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF POLAND'S NEED FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE BY URGING ONCE MORE THE SWEEPING MODERNIZATION OF THE POLISH ARMY'S EQUIPMENT. UP TO NOW, THE POLISH REGIME HAS SUCCESSFULLY RESISTED THESE URGINGS.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 WARSAW 7867

EXDIS

(COMMENT: WITH REGARD TO THE SUGGESTION IN MOSCOW 17087 THAT THE SOVIETS MAY WISH TO HAVE A TREATY EXTENDING POLISH DEFENSE OBLIGATIONS TO THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER, I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD MAKE SO INFLAMMAOTRY A PROPOSAL--WARSAW 7862. END COMMENT.)

8. THERE WAS AGREEMENT THAT GIEREK'S VISIT TO MOSCOW
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NEXT WEEK SHOULD PROVIDE THE OCCASION FOR A MORE PRECISE READING OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE POLISH-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP.

9. SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES SAID THAT, IN VIEW OF THE GRAVITY OF THE CRISIS, THEY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT POLAND'S ABILITY TO REPAY THE DEBTS IT HAD CONTRACTED IN THE WEST. I SAID THAT WE IN OUR EMBASSY HAD BEEN CONSIDERING THIS QUESTION AND WERE COMING TO MAKE UP THEIR MINDS WHETHER THEY WANTED TO ENCOURAGE THE POLES TO CONTINUE THEIR "WESTPOLITIK" OR TO CONVINCE THEM, PERHAPS SIMPLY BY FAILING TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT THE PROBLEM, THAT THEY WOULD, AFTER ALL, EVENTUALLY HAVE TO RESIGN THEMSELVES TO EXISTING WITHIN SOME SORT OF AUTARKIC INTRA-CEMA SYSTEM. I SAID WE WERE STRUCK BY THE ROUGH PARALLEL BETWEEN THE SITUATION IN WHICH GERMANY FOUND ITSELF AFTER WORLD WAR I AND POLAND'S

PRESENT DILEMMA. IN THE 1920'S, THE EUROPEAN ALLIED POWERS WERE DEMANDING REPARATIONS FROM GERMANY, BUT REFUSING TO ACCEPT THE GERMAN EXPORTS WHICH WOULD HAVE ENABLED THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC TO PAY THOSE REPARATIONS. NOW, WE IN THE WEST HAVE ENCOURAGED POLAND TO BUY HEAVILY ON CREDIT IN THE WEST, BUT MAINTAIN A CLIMATE WHICH IS INHOSPITABLE TO THE POLISH EXPORTS WHICH CAN EARN THE MONEY NEEDED TO SERVICE THE DEBT. I SAID THAT I WAS CONSCIOUS OF SUCH DEFECTS IN U.S. TRADE POLICY. QUITE APART FROM THE GOLF-CART CASE, THERE WAS THE POLISH FEAR THAT OUR PROPOSED NEW REGULATIONS ON COUNTERVAILING DUTIES WOULD NEGATE THE BENEFITS OF MFN STATUS (WARSAW 7820). I SAID THAT THE U.S. HAD ONLY A SMALL SHARE OF POLAND'S DEBT TO THE INDUSTRIALIZED WEST (ALMOST ALL EXTENDED BY PRIVATE U.S. BANKS), WHILE WESTERN EUROPE HELD MOST OF THE REST. (COMMENT: THERE SEEMED TO BE GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH THIS STATEMENT, BUT I DID NOT HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT ANY OF MY COLLEAGUES (WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR) WOULD MAKE A RELEVANT RECOMMENDATION TO HIS GOVERNMENT. (WE ARE PREPARING A FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THIS SUBJECT, WHICH SHOULD BE SENT TO THE DEPARTMENT SHORTLY.) END COMMENT.)

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10. FINALLY, THERE WAS AGREEMENT THAT THIS WINTER IS GOING TO BE A TESTING TIME FOR THE POLISH REGIME. THE MOST OPTIMISTIC THOUGHT THAT ANY OF US COULD MUSTER WAS THAT THE POLES MIGHT SOMEHOW BE ABLE TO MUDDLE THROUGH.

11. COMMENT: ONE OF THE THEORISTS OF THE POLISH INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (I HAVE FORGOTTEN HIS NAME) WROTE THAT THE FIRST STEP IN REGAINING POLAND'S FREEDOM WOULD BE THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE PEOPLE'S CONSENT TO BE GOVERNED BY THE PARTITIONING POWERS. A VERY LARGE PART OF THE POLISH PEOPLE HAS NOW WITHDRAWN ITS CONSENT FROM THE PRESENT REGIME. THE LEADERSHIP CONTINUES TO ASK FOR UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTS ITSELF ITS VISION OF

CONSTRUCTION A MODERN, FULLY INDUSTRIALIZED STATE. THE PEOPLE, HOWEVER, CONSIDER THAT THE PRICE-RISE PROPOSAL OF JUNE 24 WAS THE PROOF THAT GIEREK WAS GOING BACK ON HIS PROMISE TO RAISE THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING. THAT GOAL, AND IT ALONE, IS NOW CAPABLE OF MOTIVATING THE POLISH PEOPLE. APPEALS TO WORK FOR THE REALIZATION OF ANY OTHER GOAL FALL ON DEAF EARS. FOLLOWING THE "POLISH OCTOBER" OF 1956, IT WAS POSSIBLE

FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS TO MOBILIZE THE ENERGIES OF
THE POLISH PEOPLE, WHO FELT THAT, AFTER THE REMOVAL OF
THE "MUSCOVITE" LEADERSHIP OF BIERUT-BERMAN, THEY WERE
WORKING FOR A POLISH NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT. FOLLOW-
ING DECEMBER, 1970, MOBILIZATION WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY A
DIRECT APPEAL TO THE DESIRE TO OWN A CAR, BUILD A
HOUSE, BUY A TELEVISION SET, EAT WELL. FOLLOWING JUNE,
1976, THERE APPEARS TO BE NO NEW APPEAL BY WHICH THE
NATIONAL ENERGY--WHICH REMAINS POTENTIALLY AS
PRODUCTIVE AS EVER--CAN BE MOBILIZED. THAT IS WHY
THERE IS HERE A STRONG SENSE OF FOREBODING WHEN THE
MAN-IN-THE-STREET SAYS THAT THE OCCURRENCE OF
OPPOSITIONIST ACTIONS IN OCTOBER, DECEMBER, AND JUNE
STILL LEAVES NINE MORE MONTHS OF THE YEAR IN WHICH
SOMETHING CAN HAPPEN IN POLAND. END COMMENT.
DAVIES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REGIONAL DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONS, MEETING REPORTS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 NOV 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976WARSAW07867
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760409-1119
From: WARSAW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761183/aaaacuof.tel
Line Count: 292
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 APR 2004 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <06 APR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE CRISIS IN POLAND: A NATO CONSENSUS
TAGS: PFOR, PL
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006